

Message Text

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INFO RUMJDH/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 4176

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

USLO PEKING

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FOLLOWING IS REPEAT LA PAZ 9020, ACTION SECSTATE, INFO

BUREAU OF MINES 24 DEC:

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LA PAZ 9020

E.O. 11652: C/A

TAGS: EMIN, BL

SUBJECT: ANTIMONY: OF PRODUCERS ASSOCIATIONS AND PRC RECOGNITION

1. MINATT HAD DISCUSSION WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL OF EMUSA, THE
LARGEST ANTIMONY PRODUCER IN BOLIVIA, REGARDING THE FORMATION
OF AN ANTIMONY PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION. DIRECTOR GENERAL CON-
FIRMED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND BOLIVIA AND BETWEEN BOLIVIA AND SOUTH
AFRICA. CHINA HAS SHOWN INTEREST IN COOPERATING WITH THE OTHER
TWO MAJOR PRODUCERS OF ANTIMONY IN ORDER TO STABILIZE PRICE AND
SUPPLY. THE PRC DOES NOT DEAL DIRECTLY WITH SOUTH AFRICA, BUT
BOLIVIA ACTS AS INTERMEDIARY WITH SOUTH AFRICA. A BOLIVIAN
DELEGATION WILL GO TO CHINA AT THE END OF JANUARY, 1976 TO DIS-
CUSS AREAS OF FURTHER COOPERATION. ABOUT THE SAME TIME A
DELEGATION FROM SOUTH AFRICA WILL MEET WITH THE BOLIVIAN DELE-
GATION IN RIO DE JANEIRO.

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2. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF EMUSA SAID THAT EVENTUALLY THE ANTIMONY PRODUCERS HAD IN MIND AN AGREEMENT AMONG CONSUMERS AS WELL AS PRODUCERS BUT INDICATED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO BEGIN FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSES WITH JUST THE MORE IMPORTANT PRODUCERS. MINATT ASKED DIRECTOR GENERAL WHETHER IT WAS TRUE THAT PRC WAS INSISTING ON GOB DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION AS PRICE FOR JOINING PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION. DIRECTOR GENERAL HEDGED SOMEWHAT BUT SAID HE FELT GOB WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE PRC AT THIS POINT. HE DID NOT SEEM TO THINK THAT THIS WOULD IMPAIR FURTHER EFFORTS AT COOPERATION AMONG THE WORLD'S TOP THREE PRODUCERS.

3. COMMENT. THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS THAT EMUSA WAS PRESSING THE GOB TO RECOGNIZE PRC BECAUSE PRC WOULD NOT JOIN PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION UNTIL DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION WAS FORTHCOMING. IN SPITE OF THE RUMORS, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT GOB IS NOW CONCERNED ENOUGH ABOUT ANTIMONY ASSOCIATION TO RECOGNIZE PRC. NOR IS THERE CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT PRC IS PUSHING THAT HARD FOR RECOGNITION. THERE HAS BEEN SOME EVIDENCE LATELY THAT OFFICIALS IN MINING SECOR ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT RUSSIAN INFLUENCE, ESPECIALLY IN COMIBOL, AND THEREFORE GOB IS NOT LIKELY TO RUSH TOWARD PRC RECOGNITION. ANTIMONY IS IMPORTANT TO BOLIVIA (AND MORE IMPORTANT TO EMUSA), BUT IT IS NOT IN SAME LEAGUE AS TIN, OIL AND GAS.

4. IN ANY CASE, BOLIVIA, PRC AND SOUTH AFRICA HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE ESSENTIAL GOALS OF RELATIVE PRICE STABILITY THROUGH PRESENT INFORMAL COOPERATION. THIS COOPERATION DOES NOT NOW REPRESENT A THREAT TO U.S. CONSUMERS; INDEED, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE TO THEIR BENEFIT. THESE THREE COUNTRIES WHO CONTROL 74 PERCENT OF WORLD PRODUCTION AND 81 PERCENT OF WORLD RESOURCES SEEM TO BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO STABILIZE ANTIMONY PRICES. PRC DID NOT DUMP ANTIMONY ON THE WORLD MARKET IN 1975. THIS WOULD INDICATE CHINA'S WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE, BUT DOES NOT MEAN IT IS YET READY TO JOIN A FORMAL PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION. MANY THORNS LIE IN PATH OF MORE FORMAL AGREEMENT, PRIMARILY LACK OF RECOGNITION BETWEEN PRC AND BOLIVIA AND ENMITY BETWEEN PRC AND SOUTH AFRICA. STEDMAN UNQUOTE. ROBINSON

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